

Advisory lifted at Lost Creek Lake

Water monitoring shows a die-off in toxic bloom of blue-green algae; Fish Lake still affected

State public health officials have lifted a health advisory that warned people of possible toxins from high levels of blue-green algae in Lost Creek Lake.

The advisory at the reservoir on the Rogue River about 30 miles northeast of Medford went into effect June 20.

Lake samples taken June 14 showed that water at the Catfish Cove day-use area sported levels of the toxin-producing *Anabaena flos-aquae* at more than seven times World Health Organization thresholds for safety.

However, water sampled at the Takelma boat ramp area at the reservoir's southwest side sported levels of the algae well below unhealthy standards, according to test results from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Continued water monitoring has confirmed reduced levels of the blue-green algae that can produce toxins harmful to humans and animals.

This is the third straight year that Lost Creek has experienced an algae bloom in June. The previous advisories lasted fewer than 20 days and were lifted before the Fourth of July weekend, Oregon Department of Human Services records show.

There has never been a confirmed human illness in Oregon caused by the algae or its related toxins, though two dogs have died each of the past two years from algae-related toxins consumed from a large stagnant puddle along the Umpqua River near Elkton.

Dangerous toxin levels have never been found at Lost Creek

Lake or any other Oregon lake or reservoir. But illnesses and deaths have been documented worldwide, and public health officials nevertheless report its presence and issue advisories as a precaution based on guidelines crafted by WHO.

The algae reports take a toll on resorts and related businesses, which often see a drop-off in recreation once an advisory is posted.

The only other lake in Jackson County under a blue-green algae health advisory is Fish Lake, where the advisory was put into effect July 1.

For health information, contact the Harmful Algae Bloom Surveillance program at 971-673-0400 or www.healthoregon.org/hab; also contact the Oregon Public Health toll-free information line at 1-877-290-6767.

